

CLAIMS:

1. A communication headset, comprising:
  - an ear mount;
  - a communication base unit;
  - a hinge unit that pivotally connects the communication base unit to the ear mount and allows the ear mount to be rotated between an open position and a closed position relative to the communication base unit; and
  - a sensor that activates the communication base unit when the ear mount is rotated into the open position and deactivates the communication base unit when the ear mount is rotated into the closed position.
2. The communication headset recited in claim 1, wherein the sensor comprises a switch that is mounted inside the communication base and a detect pin that projects outwardly from the communication base unit toward the ear mount.
3. The communication headset recited in claim 2, wherein the ear mount contacts the detect pin in the closed position, and the ear mount moves out of contact with the detect pin in the open position.
4. The communication headset recited in claim 1, wherein the hinge unit includes a detent mechanism for positioning and releasably holding the ear mount in the open position.

5. The communication headset recited in claim 4, wherein the detent mechanism releasably holds the ear mount in the open position when the ear mount has been rotated between at least 20 and no more than 40 degrees away from the communication base unit.
6. The communication headset recited in claim 4, wherein the detent mechanism releasably holds the ear mount in the open position when the ear mount has been rotated 30 degrees away from the communication base unit.
7. The communication headset recited in claim 4, wherein the detent mechanism comprises an elastomeric plunger inside the hinge unit.
8. The communication headset recited in claim 7, wherein said hinge unit includes a hinge spring fixed to the ear mount, a hinge unit housing fixed to the communication base unit, a socket in the hinge unit housing, and an elastomeric plunger fixed the hinge spring and positioned within the socket.
9. The communication headset recited in claim 3, wherein the ear mount rotates about 30 degrees between the open and closed position.
10. The communication headset recited in claim 1, wherein the communication base unit includes an earphone and a microphone.
11. A communication headset, comprising:

an ear mount;  
a base housing;  
a circuit carried on the base housing and including at least one of a transmitter and a receiver;  
a hinge unit that pivotally connects the base housing and the ear mount and allows the ear mount to be rotated between an open position and a closed position relative to the base housing; and  
a switch carried in the base housing, the switch responsive to the open and closed positions of the ear mount, the switch automatically controlling the activation and deactivation of the circuit, the circuit automatically responsive to the ear mount being in the open position to power on the circuit and in the closed position to at least temporarily power down the circuit..

12. The communication headset of claim 11, where the switch includes a detect pin that projects outwardly from the housing toward the ear mount, and wherein the ear mount contacts the detect pin in the closed position, and the ear mount releases the detect pin in the open position.

13. The communication headset recited in claim 12, wherein the hinge unit includes a detent mechanism for positioning and releasably holding the ear mount in the open position and closed position, wherein the detent comprises a first plunger located in a first bore of the hinge unit.

14. The communication headset recited in claim 13, wherein the first plunger and first bore include complimentary V-shaped contours.
15. The communication headset recited in claim 14, wherein the first plunger includes a female V-shaped contour and the first bore includes a male V-shaped contour.
16. The communication headset recited in claim 15, wherein the detent further comprises a second plunger located in a second bore of the hinge unit.
17. The communication headset recited in claim 11, wherein the hinge unit includes a hinge spring fixed to the ear mount, a hinge unit housing fixed to the communication base unit, a hinge spring socket in the hinge unit housing, and an elastomeric plunger connected to the hinge spring and positioned within the socket.
18. The communication headset recited in claim 17, wherein the ear mount rotates about 30 degrees between the open and closed position.
19. The communication headset recited in claim 11, wherein the communication base unit includes an earphone and a microphone.
20. A communication headset, comprising:
  - an ear mount;
  - a communication base unit having an earphone and a microphone;

a hinge unit that pivotally connects the communication base unit to the ear mount and allows the ear mount to be rotated between an open position and a closed position relative to the communication base unit, the hinge unit including a hinge spring fixed to the ear mount, a hinge unit housing fixed to the communication base unit, a hinge spring socket in the hinge unit housing, and an elastomeric plunger fixed to the hinge spring and positioned within the socket;

a detent mechanism for positioning and releasably holding the ear mount in the open position and closed position, the detent mechanism comprising first and second opposing plungers located inside the hinge unit, the first and second opposing plungers each including a V-shaped contour that is complimentary in shape to a respective V-shaped contour located on the hinge unit; and,

a switch that activates the communication base unit in the open position and deactivates the communication unit in the closed position, the switch being mounted inside the communication base unit and including a detect pin that projects outwardly from the communication base unit toward the ear mount;

wherein the ear mount contacts the detect pin in the closed position, and the ear mount moves out of contact with the detect pin in the open position.

21. A method of operating a headset, the headset including an ear mount for supporting the headset on a user's ear, the ear mount movingly carried on a base, the base carrying a circuit for short range communication with a primary communication device and a switch for controlling the state of the circuit, the method comprising the steps of:

turning the circuit off in response to the ear mount moving to a closed position wherein the ear mount is positioned against the base; and  
turning the circuit on when the ear mount moves to an open position with a portion of the ear mount spaced from the base.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein turning the circuit off comprises moving the ear mount out of contact with a detect pin.
23. The method of claim 22, wherein turning the circuit on comprises moving the ear mount into contact with a detect pin.